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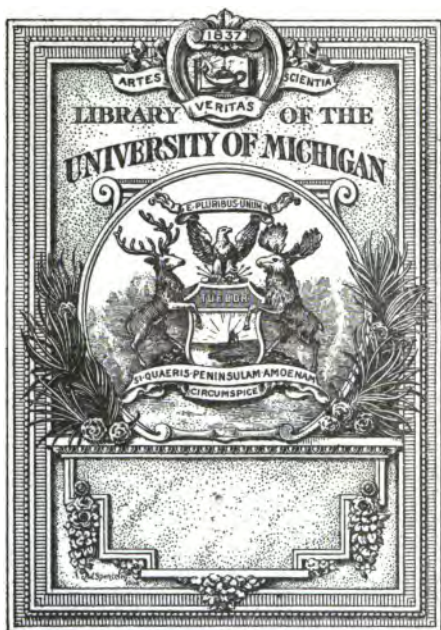
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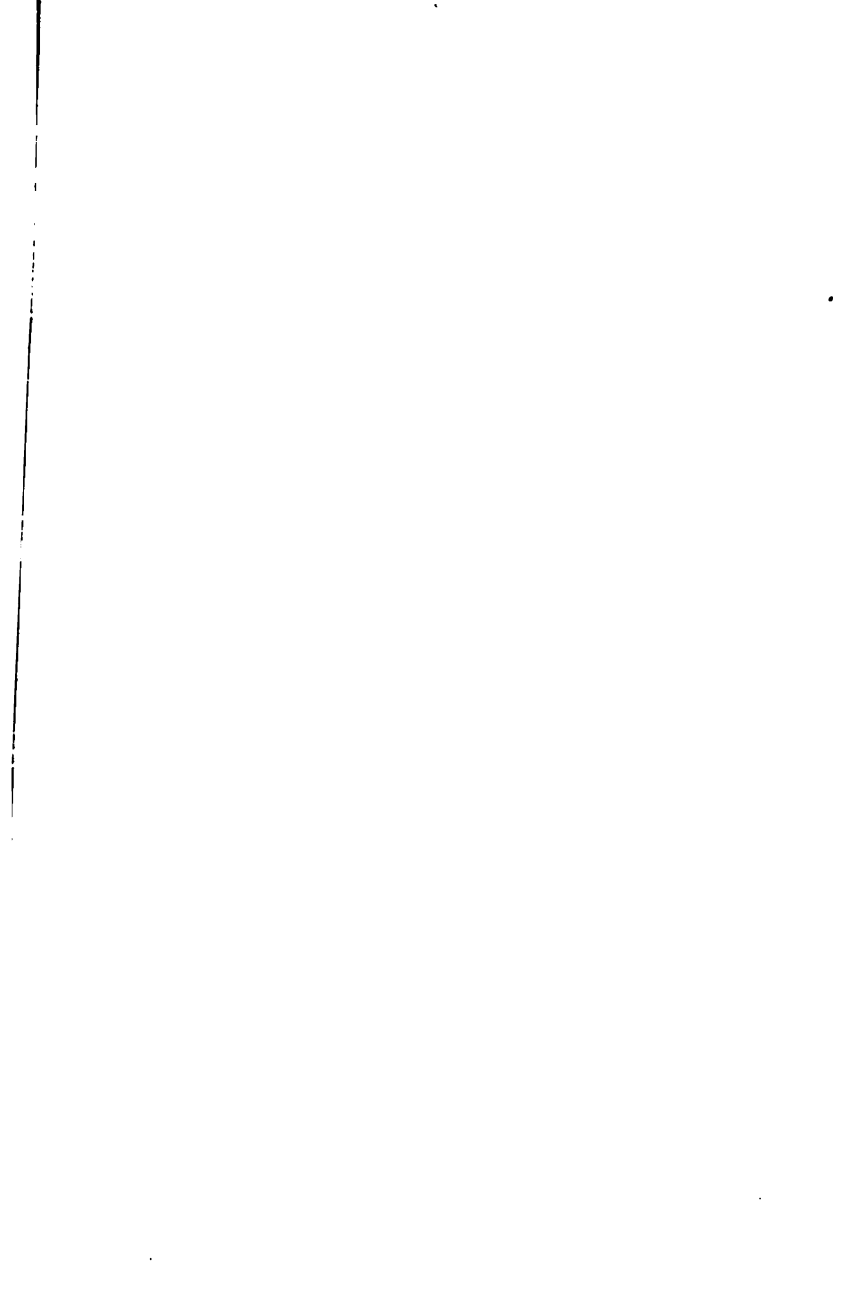
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# The Gates of Silence

with

12/5/82

## Interludes of Song

By

Robert Loveman

The Knickerbocker Press

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ROBERT LOVEMAN

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

For courtesies of reprint my thanks are due  
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R. L.

DALTON, GEORGIA.

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I

THE races rise and fall,  
The nations come and go,  
Time tenderly doth cover all  
With violets and snow.

The mortal tide moves on  
To some immortal shore,  
Past purple peaks of dusk and dawn,  
Into the evermore.

## II

I COULD not see till I was blind,  
Then color, music, light,  
Came floating down on every wind  
And noonday was at night.

I could not feel till I was dead;  
Then through the mold and wet  
A rose breathed softly overhead,  
I heard a violet.



### III

ONE by one, the gods we know  
    Weary of our trust,  
One by one the prophets go  
    Dreaming to the dust.

All the cobweb creeds of men  
    Vanish into air,  
Leaving nothing, save a "When?"  
    Nothing, save a "Where?"

#### IV

FROM the dim starry track  
Never a man comes back;  
Of future weal or woe  
Never a man doth know.

Nor you, nor I, nor he,  
Can solve the mystery;  
Come, let us boldly press  
On to the fathomless.

V

ALL the tomes of all the tribes,  
All the songs of all the scribes,  
All that priest and prophet say,  
What is it? and what are they?

Fancies futile, feeble, vain,  
Idle dream-drift of the brain,—  
As of old the mystery  
Doth encompass you and me.

## SONG

It is n't raining rain to me,  
It 's raining daffodils;  
In every dimpled drop I see  
Wild flowers on the hills;  
The clouds of gray engulf the day,  
And overwhelm the town;  
It is n't raining rain to me,  
It 's raining roses down.

It is n't raining rain to me,  
But fields of clover bloom,  
Where every buccaneering bee  
May find a bed and room;  
A health unto the happy!  
A fig for him who frets!—  
It is n't raining rain to me,  
It 's raining violets.

## VI

OLD and yet young, the jocund Earth  
Doth speed among the spheres,  
Her children of imperial birth  
Are all the golden years.

The happy orb sweeps on,  
Led by some vague unrest,  
Some mystic hint of joys unborn  
Springing within her breast.

## VII

WHAT if I wake in the dark,  
After the last long sleep?  
What if no friendly spark  
Vigil about me keep?

What if the alien shores  
Baffle my blinded barque,  
And lost on some wild Azores,—  
What if I wake in the dark?

## VIII

So much I love God's sky,  
And all He giveth me,  
That when I come to die,  
I feel how it will be.

My swift soul as it flies  
In triumph singing on,  
Will pass still lakes of Moonrise,  
And wild cataracts of Dawn.

## IX

Poor rambling, shambling soul of mine,  
Beyond the night, beyond the day,  
When thou dost unto death resign  
This happy habitat of clay,

In high conclave, at feasts divine,  
Will legions leap to heed thy nod?  
Or, doomed to darkness, wilt thou whine,  
A beggar at the gates of God?



## X

WHAT of the men of Mars,  
And maids of Mercury?  
What of the loves and wars  
These swirling systems see?

How do the Moon-folk fare?  
What ships ply Saturn's seas?  
And what brave races rare  
Throng the proud Pleiades?

## SONG

THE Dawn is a wild, fair woman,  
With sunrise in her hair;  
Look where she stands, with pleading hands,  
To lure me there.

The Dusk is dark and glorious,  
A star upon her brow;  
With sunset blushes in her cheeks,  
She beckons now.

I, ever fickle, stand between,  
Upon my lips a rune,  
And in my summer-singing soul—  
The hoiden happy Noon.

## XI

I WANT no trickster God,—  
No cunning, crafty spook—  
Who smites a people, or a rock,  
Or one who writes a book.

For me a God who flings  
Out of His spendthrift hands  
The whirling worlds like pebbles,  
The meshèd stars like sands.

## XII

I SOUGHT the sun,—he struggled on;  
The moon made no reply,  
I questioned every nomad star  
Upon the desert sky.

But never syllable or sign  
To my impatient breath,—  
Give me the plummet, Pilot;  
I will sound the deeps of death.

### XIII

I KNOW not what it is,  
I know not where nor how,  
But, while the pallid kiss  
Of Death is on my brow,

My dauntless soul will leap  
In eager quest to find  
Where God doth love and keep  
His flocks of humankind.

## XIV

**WHERE** are the legioned dead-  
Of all the pallid past?  
Out of the flesh they sped,  
On to the unknown vast.

Tented upon the air?  
By valiant spirits led?  
How and when,—and where,—  
Where are the legioned dead?

## XV

THE Earth 's a burly animal  
With fearless man astride;  
Down the rugged gulfs of time,  
He doth boldly ride.

The Earth 's a burly animal,  
Bellowing through space,  
Bearing upon his shaggy back—  
And where—man's royal race?

## SONG

HERE are roses for a rose,  
Fragrance for the fair,  
For thy soft noontide bosom  
And thy twilight hair.

Let each pleading petal tell  
All my passion's woe;  
Crush my crimson couriers  
To thy heart of snow.

Crush them with thy sweet kisses  
Down to drowsy death,  
Make their pure souls immortal  
With thy holy breath.



## XVI

WHEN Fate hath dealt his mortal thrust,  
And love and life are gone,  
The body will dissolve to dust,—  
The gaunt soul stagger on

Across vast continents of space,  
And shoreless seas of air,  
Seeking its new appointed place,  
Again to do, to dare.

## XVII

THE body is the barque  
That bears the soul away,  
Down to the docks of dark,  
Down to the harbor gray.

Then suddenly alone,  
The spirit leaps afar,  
On, on, from zone to zone,  
On, on, from star to star.

## XVIII

WHAT new visions shall we see  
With immortal eyes?  
What vast pageants will there be  
Passing in the skies?

What new melodies shall greet  
Our immortal ears,  
When we reach the far retreat  
O'er the bridge of years?

## XIX

THE earth doth bravely swing about  
The hills and vales of space,  
In God's sweet coronal of worlds,  
It keeps its joyous place.

Flung from the hand Omnipotent,  
Until old Time be gray  
The vaulted Night will hoard her stars,  
The Sun will drink the day.

## XX

WHAT shall be when we are free  
Of all earthen care?  
What do our pale brethren see  
In the otherwhere?

Is it noon, or is it night,  
T' other side o' death?  
Pilot! is a land of light  
Just beyond our breath?

## SONG

Back to the siren South,  
Each mad red rose aglow,  
To the vintage of her mouth,  
Where purple kisses grow.

Back to her Orient eyes,  
Her bosom's buds ablaze;  
Languorous land of ardent skies,  
What should the cold North know?

## XXI

It is a daring flight  
That doth await the soul,  
Across an unknown night  
Unto an unknown goal.

Beyond the gates of space,  
Away, and yet away,  
To find the ordained place,  
Upon the destined day.

## XXII

WHAT is it, where is it,—how is it  
After the day is done?  
What goal and fate for love and hate,  
Beyond the lusty sun?

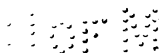
How is it, where is it,—what is it,  
Nirvana, heaven, hell?  
Shakespeare, Omar, Solomon,  
Will not God let you tell?



### XXIII

My mind is fast made up,—  
If God doth thwart me here,  
I 'll seek on somewhere east of Mars,  
Or west of Jupiter.

I will not be denied,  
My eager soul must know  
And find my brethren who have died  
Through all the long ago.



## XXIV

THE hills about my village throng  
With steadfast friends of mine;  
They stand up brave, and tall, and strong,  
Sir Oak, Sir Elm, Sir Pine.

Subjects of sun, and wind, and sky,  
They wait, they wave, they pray.  
Alas, alas! that you and I  
Cannot be calm as they!

## XXV

It is not fair that God should keep  
The secret to His breast,  
And drift us down to dreamless sleep,  
The mystery unguessed.

No voice from out the silence calls,  
No finger points the way,—  
Blind beggars shut between the walls,—  
The walls of night and day.

## SONG

FOLLY, we, alas! have been  
Jocund, oft and time again;  
Modest Virtue now shall be  
Fair handmaiden unto me.

In thy loving eyes the tears  
Hallowed half the wastrel years;  
Ocean odors in thy hair,  
Lips that led to Passion's lair.

Farewell, Folly, let us part,  
Bind the old wounds in the heart;  
Gentle Virtue now shall be  
Sweet handmaiden unto me.

## XXVI

LIFE, thou art so beautiful,  
    Cheek and eyes and hair,  
God doth seem to think and dream,  
    How to make thee fair.

And thy swarthy sister,  
    With her hooded brow  
And her muffled lips of lead;—  
    What, O Death, art thou?

## XXVII

Out beyond the bourn of things,  
Where each star a censer swings,  
Infant orbs are taking flight  
From the teeming womb of Night.

And o'er vasty voids of space,  
Reeling on from place to place,  
Worn and wrinkled, gaunt and gray,  
Worlds are tott'ring to decay.

## XXVIII

Who hath known, and who hath seen,  
And who can testify?  
What bold adventurer hath been  
To star-lands in the sky?

Books there be, for you and me,  
Maps of the charted "Whence;"  
Alas, my sceptic soul must see  
Some better evidence.

## XXIX

I WENT in search of Beauty,  
Up and down, and far and wide  
And streaming, beaming, gleaming  
She was ever at my side.

I went in search of Beauty,  
Over meadow, over mart,  
And leaping, creeping, weeping,  
She was ever in my heart.



### XXX

MORN leaps in mailèd gold,  
And cries, "Lo, I am Youth,  
O daring deed, and bold,  
I covet honor, truth."

Night clasps her patient stars  
Close to her loving breast,  
And, proud of life's brave scars,  
Says softly, "I must rest."

## SONG

I HUMBLY thank the gods benign,  
For all the blessings that are mine.

My books, my garden, and my dog,  
For mountain, meadow, fen, and bog.

The morning drips her dew for me,  
Noon spreads an opal canopy.

Home-bound, the drifting cloud-crafts rest  
Where sunset ambers all the west;

Soft o'er the poppy-fields of sleep  
The drowsy winds of dreamland creep.

What idle things are wealth and fame  
Beside the treasures one could name!

I humbly thank the gods benign  
For all the blessings that are mine.

### XXXI

WE are captives close confined  
To this cockle-shell of clay;  
Let us horse the champing wind,  
Let us stride to worlds away.

Let us sail the seas of space,  
To celestial shores afar,  
And go voyaging apace,  
On from peopled star to star.

## XXXII

WHY is my wretched body old?

My heart is young and free;

My soul, undaunted, wild, and bold,

Doth leap in ecstasy.

Yet Time doth clutch me at the throat,

And wields his potent sway,

Dumb Charon waiteth by the boat,—

We must away, away.

### XXXIII

O FOR the centuries to be,  
Of beauty and simplicity,  
When wisdom, truth, and love shall reign,  
And science slay disease and pain.

When all the nations shall be blent  
Into one loving parliament,  
When wars are done, and earth shall be  
One peaceful, happy family.

## XXXIV

AFTER a million years  
Have stored their wealth away,  
What will our finer kinsmen think  
Of us who live to-day?

Will some say, " 'T is a jest;  
They had not souls at all " ?  
And others, " Never say that we  
Sprang from such animal " ?

## XXXV

WHAT of the instant when  
The soul fares forth the clay?  
What mighty moment then  
Of rapture or dismay?

What have the gods in store,  
What vast, auspicious scheme,  
Behind death's darkened door,—  
Beyond our wildest dream?

## SONG

Love distilleth in thine eyes,  
Such a draught divine,  
That I am not otherwise,  
Draining down the wine.

For with reeling soul afire,  
Staggering 'mong men,  
I am frenzied with desire—  
But to drink again.



## XXXVI

THAT old red fear comes over me,  
The stealthy, haunting dread,  
That when the sod doth cover me  
My soul, too, shall be dead.

Why think the soul survive its clay,  
Even an instant's span?  
What beacon holds aloft a ray,  
Presumptuous, proud man?



## XXXVII

WHAT star-shod paths lead up to God  
We may not know, we may not see;  
The highways that the dead have trod  
Are curtained close with mystery.

But if this goodly earth and fair  
Be token of infinite grace,  
Ah, who can dream the glories rare  
In store for man's immortal race!

W. W. U.

### XXXVIII

WHEN death should smooth my furrowed face  
And still my breathèd woes,  
I thought to come unto that place  
Of rapture and repose.

At last my free soul outward sped  
Unto the destined sphere;  
“We wonder,” there the spirits said,  
“Where we shall go from here.”

### XXXIX

NOTWITHSTANDING all that 's writ,  
Nothing, nothing, do we know,  
Mystery doth compass it  
Till the soul doth further go.

All the guesses idle are,  
All the prophecies are vain;  
Death may solve the riddle rare,—  
This is but a guess again.

## XL

I WAKED from out the drowse of death  
That held my spirit fast;—  
“Sleep on,” a soft voice said, and yet  
A billion years had passed.

The tireless æons onward sped  
Until a golden chime  
Rang from the dark; the voice then said,  
“Rouse thee, 't is now thy time.”

## XLI

IN vain, in vain,—we may not know  
God's secret wise and true,  
Down to the doors of death we go  
And pass the portals through.

What silly heavens in the skies  
The prating prophets plan!  
Some unimagined, vast surprise  
Shall greet the soul of man!

## XLII

O MYSTERY of mysteries,  
O secret vast and rare,  
We stretch blind hands unto the skies,  
We fathom everywhere.

From the dumb silence comes no sound,  
No syllable we hear,  
And man must venture outward bound,  
A chartless voyager.

### XLIII

WHY one poor heaven?—there may be  
A thousand after this;  
The soul, from fleshly fetters free,  
May climb from bliss to bliss.

From high and then to higher still,  
And nobler battles won,  
Guided by God's omniscient will,  
Go on, and on, and on.



## XLIV

Who is Infinity—

Who governeth all things—

How sweet to Him must be

Our simple offerings!

The incense of our deeds,

The fragrance of our faith,

While on the chariot speeds—

To destination Death.

## XLV

AFTER the day, the night,  
After the month, the year,—  
Naught will survive the dark and light  
Save Pity's melting tear.

After the life, the death,—  
How swift the moments speed!  
Naught will survive our fleeting breath  
Save kindly word and deed.

## SONG

COME to my ears, come to my heart,  
Laugh from my lips, O Song,  
Cry to me, sigh to me, hie to me, fly to me,  
Sing in my soul, O Song;  
Below is the wave, and above is the sky,  
Croon to me, swoon to me, Song;  
Creep to me, weep to me, laggard, O leap to me,—  
Let us away from wrong.

Stay with me, pray with me, Song, O away with  
me,  
Far let us venture afar,  
Over the deep to a still harbor bar,  
'Neath some sweet, penitent star;  
O tender haze of the heart's happy days,  
O the fond fancies that throng!  
A truce unto care and the isles of despair,  
Haste to my heart, O Song!

## XLVI

ALL else of Man is dead, and I  
Stand lone upon the sphere;  
The pale earth shivers, sigh on sigh,  
And shakes with frenzied fear.

Some Titan tears the world apart,  
And sets the seas to rout,  
And I, a silence at my heart,  
See the cold sun fade out.

## XLVII

ANOTHER day comes up the east,  
And totters down the west;  
Another night will rock to sleep  
The stars upon her breast.

Year in, year out, they file along,  
*Sans* intermission thus,—  
I sometimes think the program is  
A bit monotonous.

## XLVIII

OVER the sea we go,—  
Over the sea of life,  
Past reefs of want and woe,  
Through blinding fogs of strife.

O happy sea and wind,—  
Soon, soon, we will forget  
The islands far behind,  
Those islands of regret.

## XLIX

I **WEEP** so often now,  
It may be death is near;  
A calm is on my brow,  
A song within mine ear.

I weep so often now—  
Come, faith and love and trust,  
And teach me humbly how  
The valiant go to dust.

L

I do not grieve my soul  
Concerning what will be  
While Time's broad billows roll  
On to Eternity.

I know the dawns of days  
That drink the darkness there  
Will blossom into gorgeous Noons,  
Up-piled everywhere.